The Recklessness of Jamie Bayne.

By W. P. Kirkwood

THEY say that coming events cast their shadows before; but if there was any shadow to the event which was lurking just around the corner for James Bayne the day he went to photograph the sheep dogs it certainly was not cast far enough ahead to be of the slightest use to anybody. Consequently Jamie—no one ever called him James—walked right into the big adventure of his life without a glimmer of warning. That is, he walked part of the way.

Jamie was, and still is, for that matter, an associate editor of the Evening Bulletin, an independent and forceful newspaper of one of the many self styled metropolises of the West; just which one doesn't at all matter. His chief duty, of course, was the writing of editorials. Now, if you had ever seen Jamie of an evening in his bachelor apartment in the Concordia with from three to six of his neighbors' children swarming about him in front of his little log fire while he told them tales of seven league boots, wishing rings, Aladdin's lamps, magic carpets, and so on—if you had ever seen Jamie so engaged you would never have thought of him as a young man of no little learning and much practical wisdom who could wield a trenchant editorial pen—or typewriter. Puncturing the moral—or immoral—armor of the self boosting and crooked great, slicing up the obviously false political doctrines of rival newspapers, and so on, were Jamie's delight. Sometimes when he was busy with these things I'm sure he swaggered just a little in his soul, as if he looked upon himself as a sort of modern St. George slaying up to date dragons. It would at least have been like the whimsical Jamie to think this.

While, however, "Jamie" was a man of parts and whimsical spirit, with adult folk he was shy and reserved, especially in the presence of women. For companionship therefore he turned to the kiddies who lived near him, to nature as he found her in the fields and woodlands about the city or to the dogs he sometimes met when cutting 'cross lots through the park to his flat. "Jamie" seldom met a dog, indeed, that he did not speak to it or try to make friends with it, and one of his pet diversions was the taking of pictures of dogs of all sorts and conditions and pedigrees.

His Fondness for Dogs.

It was this fondness for dogs and dog pictures that led "Jamie" to the big State fair then in progress on the edge of the city to get snap shots of some famous sheep dogs straight from the "hame countrie"—for there was a strong tincture of Scotch in "Jamie's" blood—and it was there that "Jamie" entered upon the unshadowed adventure already referred to.

He had found the dogs in the race track oval, had played with them and got the pictures he was after, and was starting away, when there swept across his path a huge shadow, the shadow of a flying machine. With "Jamie" flying machines were already something of an old story. He had never been aloft in one, and never would be if he could help it, he had said, but he was interested in watching the flight of this machine because it was driven not by a man but by a young woman. "Mademoiselle Dutoit in Two Daring Aeroplane Flights Daily," he had read on the big billboards as he had made his way to the ground.

The machine swept gracefully around, so like a huge bird that "Jamie," his imagination touched, was instantly eager to get a picture of it as it tilted and swayed in its great circle earthward. Before he could get his camera levelled and sighted, however, the machine touched ground, danced along a few yards on its rubber tired wheels and came to a stop almost directly in front of him.

Then Jamie did something that for him was quite out of the ordinary. He spoke to Mlle. Dutoit. The words leaped out without forethought on his part, quite as if he had spoken to a child playing with the squirrels in a park.

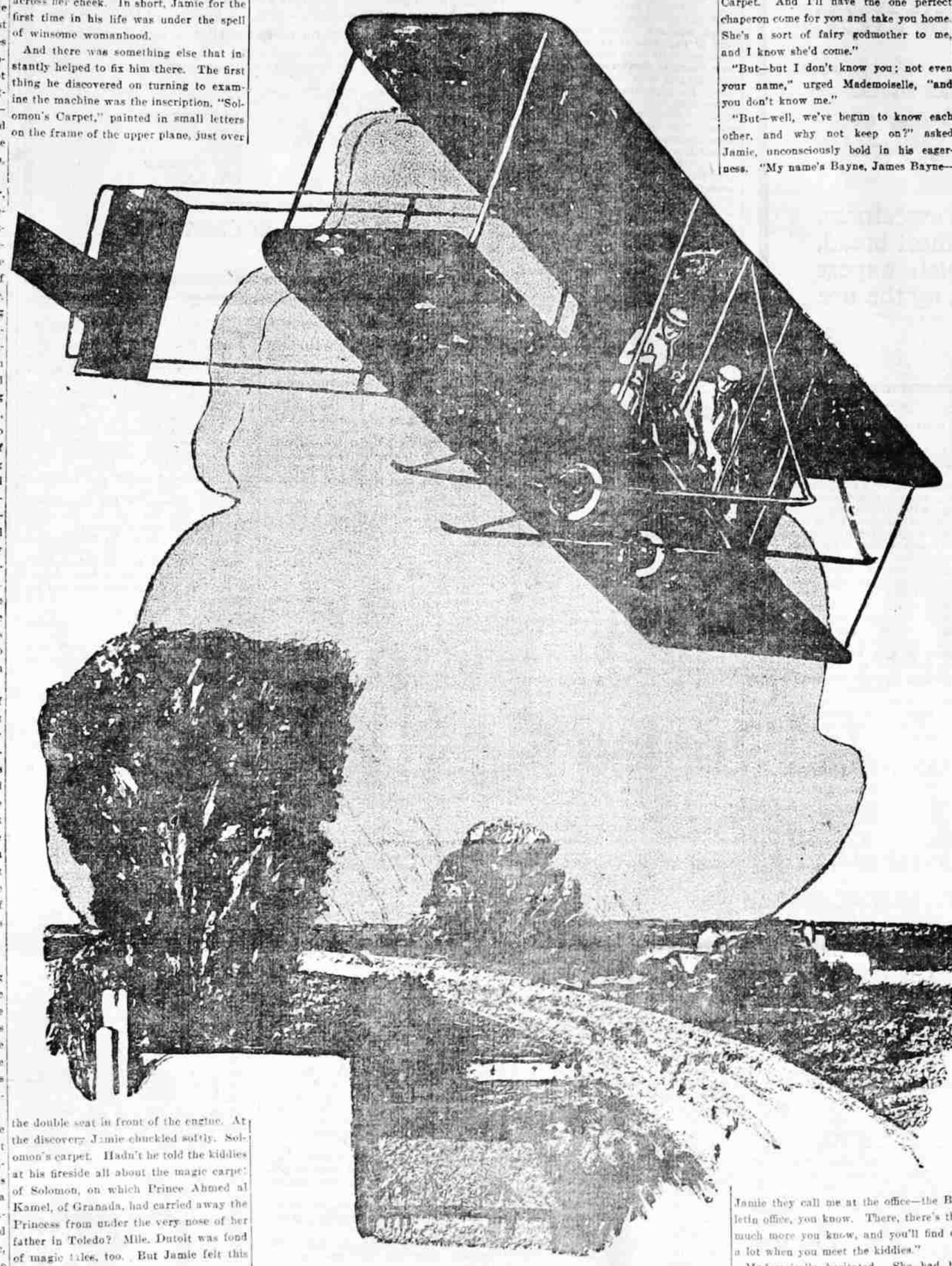
"I'm sorry you came down so quickly," he said, lifting his cap. "I was just going to snap you—take your picture, I mean."

Mademoiselle smiled. There was certainly nothing in the manner of the small gentleman who had spoken to give offence. "Too bad," she said, "but if you'll wait a minute I'm going up again."

"Thank you," answered Jamie, again touching his cap. "I'll surely wait."

Mlle. Dutoit's words set Jamie's blood a-tingle. There was an indefinable tone and accent in them, which it would be utterly useless to attempt to reproduce in print, but it was there, and it delighted Jamie's sensitive ear, as the girl's winsome face and trim figure clad in a khaki flying suit pleased his eye. As she went about an inspection of her machine with the mechanicians Jamie noted her slight girlishness, her clear brown eyes, in which laughter shone as if the risks their owner had been taking up there in the air had been quite forgotten in the exhilaration of the flight, the fine forehead which even a clumsy helmet did not hide, the flushed cheeks, which had evidently never known the taint of artificial color, a mouth which smiled as if fond of the exercise and a strand of loosened hair in which the sun played as it blew caressingly across her cheek. In short, Jamie for the first time in his life was under the spell of winsome womanhood.

And there was something else that instantly helped to fix him there. The first thing he discovered on turning to examine the machine was the inscription, "Solomon's Carpet," painted in small letters on the frame of the upper plane, just over



The Machine Swept Gracefully Around Like a Huge Bird.

the double seat in front of the engine. At the discovery Jamie chuckled softly. Solomon's carpet. Hadn't he told the kiddies at his fireside all about the magic carpet of Solomon, on which Prince Ahmed al Kamel, of Granada, had carried away the Princess from under the very nose of her father in Toledo? Mlle. Dutoit was fond of magic tales, too. But Jamie felt this rather than thought it.

Mlle. Dutoit came along again as Jamie was still gazing at the inscription.

"You wouldn't like a ride on Solomon's Carpet," she affirmed rather than asked.

"But I would, though, if—it the Princess would take me," exclaimed Jamie, smiling, and forgetting altogether how he had said that nothing would ever induce him to go a-flying.

"Really, I Didn't Mean To."

Mademoiselle really hadn't expected this. She had just been making conversation with a pleasant gentleman in whose fine, clear, blue eyes she had read an interest in her machine and an appreciation of the name she had given it. Besides, she had noticed a touch of gray above his temples, and had felt that the caution which goes with gray hairs would make him say no.

"Really," she laughed, "I didn't mean it."

"But it's no fair backing out," insisted Jamie playfully.

"Oh, I'm not," protested Mademoiselle. "But there is a risk, you, know," she added seriously.

"Who ever heard of an accident to Solomon's Carpet?" urged Jamie stoutly.

So it was settled that Jamie should join Mademoiselle for the flight.

"'Everybody's Daddy' going up on Solomon's Carpet," chuckled Jamie half to himself. "Won't the kiddies' eyes stick out!"

"You have children?" asked Mlle. Dutoit abruptly, facing Jamie as he took his seat.

"Only borrowed ones," he answered, knowing the thought that had prompted the question—that a man with children had no business in a flying machine. "I'm just the story telling daddy for half a dozen little folk. They call me 'Everybody's Daddy' to distinguish me from their proper daddies, you see."

"Oh!" was all Mademoiselle said.

Then the engine was started, the big propeller blades began to crackle like the wings of a huge grasshopper frightened into sudden flight, Mademoiselle's small gloved hand, which she had raised above her head, dropped to a lever, and, at the signal, the mechanicians released the machine, and away it went bounding over the turf.

Suddenly the jarring ceased and the ground seemed to be slowly sinking away from under Jamie, who was thrilled with excitement. He wanted to shout, as a boy shouts when his coaster gets to top speed down a steep hill. He turned to look at Mademoiselle and caught a flash of amusement in her eyes as she noted his boyish enthusiasm.

Up, up they climbed; only it seemed less like rising than sitting still and watching the half brown, half green field under them drop away. Even the great grand stand over to their right, with its cheering crowds, seemed to be sinking, sinking.

They swept away to the northward over open fields, and then around in front of the grand stand, Mademoiselle in perfect control of the wonderful machine. Again they circled, climbing higher, and cut across over the oval enclosed by the race-track.

Suddenly the engine missed a stroke, then another, and then stopped altogether. The blades of the propeller ceased their crackling beat against the air. The machine instantly lost headway, seemed to pause as if about to plunge earthward, like a kite suddenly cut loose from its string, but with fatal swiftness.

Jamie shot a glance at his companion. His thought was of her rather than of himself. He saw her face blanch, and he thought he heard an "Oh!" stifled in her throat.

But in a flash she tilted the elevating plane of the machine sharply downward for a volplane, their one hope of safety. They slanted earthward with terrific speed. Jamie's heart seemed to jump into his throat; his hands clenched, one on the upright at his left and the other on the rim of the seat; but his thought of Mademoiselle, as they shot down, down, kept him from anything like a panic of fear.

Then, just as they seemed about to crash face foremost into the earth, Mademoiselle lifted the elevating plane slightly, and the machine under the headway gained by the descent shot forward, skimming the turf and coming to an easy stop.

"Great!" cried Jamie in relief, springing out and extending his hand to Mlle. Dutoit. But the hand that took his trembled, and Jamie knew that, now that they were safe, Mademoiselle was frightened.

"Splendid, Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, hoping to divert her thought from the peril just escaped, and still holding her hand. "Splendid! It couldn't have been done better!"

Mademoiselle did not faint, but she caught Jamie's arm with her free hand and leaned heavily upon it.

"Ridiculous of me, isn't it?" she said trying to smile.

"Not a bit," answered Jamie; "perfectly proper—for a princess, you know."

At this the girl laughed, and a moment later, the machinists coming up, Jamie led her away toward her tent, talking as he went.

Princess of the Magic Carpet.

"I'll tell the kiddies all about it," he said. "Coasting down the sky, I'll call it; and won't their eyes get big! I shall be a real hero to them. I wish you could be there to see them."

"Why not?" he asked after a pause. "Why not come? The children would be wild with delight to have you. Just think—to see the Princess of a really, truly Solomon's Carpet! And you'd love the little ones. Won't you come?"

"Oh, but I couldn't," answered Mademoiselle.

"But you could," insisted Jamie, making up his plans as he went along. "I'll ask the children to come up to a 'party' in honor of the Princess of the Magic Carpet. And I'll have the one perfect chaperon come for you and take you home. She's a sort of fairy godmother to me, and I know she'd come."

"But—but I don't know you; not even your name," urged Mademoiselle, "and you don't know me."

"But—well, we've begun to know each other, and why not keep on?" asked Jamie, unconsciously bold in his eagerness. "My name's Bayne, James Bayne—Jamie they call me at the office—the Bulletin office, you know. There, there's that much more you know, and you'll find out a lot when you meet the kiddies."

Mademoiselle hesitated. She had had invitations from men often enough—too often—before, but never one like this. Others had presumed, since she had become an aviatrix, to invite her to dinners, to the theatre and to after theatre suppers. How she hated them for it! But this was different, and the man himself was so different. She had already seen that there was nothing of the coward about him, and she instinctively felt that there was nothing of the cad.

"You will come, won't you?" begged Jamie. "It's for the little folk, you know."

Mademoiselle yielded at last to Jamie's impetuosity. Yes, she would come for the sake of the little folk. She gave Jamie the name of her hotel, and he left, promising to send for her the following evening.

The next morning Jamie found awaiting him at his office a letter from his one sister, Margaret, an instructor in a girls' school a hundred miles or more away. The letter ran:—

"Dear Jamie Boy:—I've just learned that the Mlle. Dutoit who is going about the country as an aviator—or should I say aviatrix?—is a girl who was in my class for two years at Miss Laird's. Her name is Marie. I wonder what Miss Laird would say if she knew. Her flesh would simply corrugate. But Marie was a dear girl and we all loved her and were awfully sorry when she had to leave—some family break-up, if I remember. Jane Porter tells me that she—Marie—was taught to fly by her brother, who took to aviation—how I hate that word! Because it's so garishly new, I guess—when his father died and left things in a tangle. He—the brother—had made a contract for a series of exhibition flights, but met with an accident, and Marie insisted on taking his place. Plucky, wasn't it? But she was always that.

"Now, Jamie, I know you don't like girls—though I could never quite see why, with such an estimable sister—but I want you to see Marie, for the papers say she is in M—— this week, and tell her—well, something nice as coming from me. Then be good and write me all about it."

Saying nice things to young ladies was far from being Jamie's forte and his brow puckered at the thought. Then he solved the puzzle by sitting down and writing:—

"Dear Mademoiselle:—The enclosed missive—'missive' is so much better than 'letter' when one is dealing with the Princess of Solomon's Carpet—arrived this morning. It will, I trust, ease your conscience, if need be, as to your part in my plan for the wee folk this evening. I told them last night that I had met the Princess of Solomon's Carpet and that she was coming to see them. They fairly gasped in their excited efforts to ask questions, and I had to tell them that they should have the whole story this evening. Mrs. Harrison, your duenna—of course a duenna and not a chaperon—will call for you at seven."

Mlle. Dutoit, receiving the double "missive" before starting out for the day, felt a fine glow of pleasure. She had not realized how hungry she was for friendship—or was it something else?—and now she could think of Mr. Bayne as a friend, the brother of an old school friend.

That night when Jamie was ready to tell his story it was a charmed circle that was gathered about his fireplace. He was in a big chair on one side of the fire, with Three Wheeler on one knee and Knocker on the other. Three Wheeler had been so dubbed by Jamie because he rode a velocipede. Knocker got his name from the fact that his chief plaything was a hammer which the agent of the Concordia made a great fuss about. On the other side of the fire, on a hassock, sat Mademoiselle with Miss Hopper and Miss Jumpit each holding a hand. Miss Hopper had been so named because the first time Jamie met her she was playing hop-scotch. Miss Jumpit had been trying to play the same game, but she always put the other foot down, hence her name. Between the two sat Mrs. Harrison with Slider, who had won his appellation through his skill in coasting the banisters. Altogether, Jamie thought he had never seen a picture that pleased him so much, and he never had.

"Once upon a time, a young man—well, a middling young man—was out in a field with a shepherd and his dogs," began Jamie, taking up his promised story. "Suddenly there came floating down out of the sky, what do you think?—Solomon's Carpet. The young man knew it was Solomon's Carpet, because on it were printed the words. On the carpet sat a rare and radiant maiden"——

"Was she bwootful?" interrupted Three Wheeler, for whom rare and radiant were new words in Jamie's story telling.

"Poetically speaking, only," modestly disclaimed Mademoiselle.

"'Bwootiful' as—as Little Golden Hair," answered Jamie.

Three Wheeler of course ignored Mlle. Dutoit's answer, but at Jamie's he uttered an expressive "Oh!" which trailed off into a sigh of vast contentment.

An Answer to His Problem.

Jamie then went on with his tale. There is no use in repeating it all. It ended:—

"So the young man and the Princess came down in a beautiful green field, and—and lived happily ever afterward."

This did not satisfy Three Wheeler, who was a stickler against "skipping."

"And—and did ve young man mahwie ve Princess," he asked, in order to have the gap filled in.

Jamie was nonplussed, but Mlle. Dutoit came to the rescue.

"No, Three Wheeler," she said, "he didn't; that's the reason they lived happily ever afterward."

This was too deep for Three Wheeler and he fell to pondering, with Jamie, for want of something better to say, telling him that princesses were sometimes flippant. This didn't help the little chap any, but as it was intended for Mlle. Dutoit it didn't matter.

As Jamie sat by his slowly dying fire after his guests had gone he was not smiling with pleasure over the memories of the evening, but searching his mind for some way to go on knowing Mademoiselle. He asked nothing more than that. She would be going away in a few days. What was he to do? Of course, he could go out to the fair grounds, but he shrank from that as looking too much like pursuit, for she could scarcely avoid him there. Before she had gone he had tried to think of some excuse for meeting her again, but none had suggested itself; he was not experienced in such things. Had he known that her sympathies had been touched to the quick by her evening with him and his borrowed children, or that there had come something very like an ache in her heart at the thought that such pleasant hours were so fleeting it would have been easier for him. But he hadn't known it, and her good night had had the finality of goodby.

Toward evening the next day he found an answer to his problem. He wired to Margaret, his sister:—

"I need you dreadfully. Don't worry, but come at once. Answer."

The answer came the next morning:—

"Will arrive at five P. M."

On receiving this message Jamie at once 'phoned Mlle. Dutoit that his sister was coming that evening, and asked her to join them for an evening at the theatre.

But when they were at the theatre Margaret and Mrs. Harrison, who had been pressed into service again in front and Marie and Jamie in the shadows of their box, all of Jamie's shyness and reserve seemed to take possession of him. The pretence and make-believe which had characterized his other hours with Mademoiselle were lost. He could find nothing to say.

The first act was finished and the lights were turned up, and Margaret and Marie fell into a talk of old schooldays. Then the lights went out again. Still Jamie was silent. But at last he found words, desperate words.

"Mademoiselle," he said (he could not bring himself to say Marie), "I love you. Will you marry me?"

Marie turned a startled face to him, but caught such an appealing, wistful look in his face that a sudden mothering sense of sympathy for him filled her heart, and hot tears flooded her eyes. But the instinctive caution which experience had taught her asserted itself, and she turned away, silent.

Almost unconsciously on Jamie's part his hand sought hers on the arm of the chair between them. Marie let it lie there for a moment, then withdrew her hand, and whispered a frightened "No, no, no!"

Jamie read something other than final denial in her act and words, however, and for the rest of the evening he was the playful, whimsical Jamie she had known him for.

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That was all two years ago. The other day I went out to take dinner with Jamie and Marie at their wee bit of a bungalow in the woods at the edge of town. The maid put me in a big chair in the living room. There I could hear Jamie and Marie talking in their rooms, not quite prepared for an early coming guest. I did not try to listen to their talk, and deserved to hear something painful to my self-esteem, but I didn't. They were discussing the extraordinarily swift courtship and marriage of one of Jamie's friends.

"It's foolish to take such risks," said Marie.

"Perhaps I set 'im a bad example," answered Jamie.

"You didn't," retorted Marie. "It was a whole year from the time you—we met until we were married."

"But that wasn't my fault," declared Jamie, "and I wish it hadn't been."

"You silly boy," laughed Marie happily.

Then there was a sound very like ——, but at this I got up and banged my chair viciously. The envy some people feel at the sheer happiness of others can be expressed only by kicking the furniture.

QUEER SOCIETIES FOR HELPING THINGS ALONG.

THERE are all sorts of societies and organizations which one never hears about going ahead with some one or another kind of work that the originators believe to be important in this great city of New York, and it is a thing to make the pessimist hide his head and cease from grumbling to know that all of these quiet and unpretentious organizations are engaged in projects which have no selfish motive, but are conducted solely with the object of benefiting the human race.

There is an earnest young woman, for instance, who has started a society for carrying home one's own packages, just because she feels that the self-indulgence of society at large in refusing to carry home even the smallest package purchased in a shop increases the shopkeeper's expenses and cuts down the wage he might otherwise be willing to pay his employes.

In vain have her friends sought to suggest to this young woman that if the public carried home its packages it would be unduly burdened, with the result of depriving many worthy drivers of delivery wagons of the means of earning their daily bread. The young woman refuses to listen to such arguments, but insists on sacrificing herself on the altar of her small and medium sized packages. She does consent to have large packages and those containing dripping substances, such as mackerel, for instance, delivered in the usual manner. She has found great difficulty in making converts to her plan, but her personal ardor continues undiminished despite the scarcity of the membership.

Another young woman with somewhat socialistic leanings has organized a society for making one's own bed instead of having the servant do it. The time is bound to come, says the bed making advocate, when we shall all be obliged to do a certain amount of manual labor, because socialism or something akin to it is sure to triumph before long, and we might as well prepare ourselves for the future by doing such manual labor now as is involved in making our own bed. So she has organized a society of persons pledged to make their own beds every day in the year. She has had more members to join than the parcel carrying young woman, but her membership is not as yet overwhelming.

It is one of the stronger sex who has organized a society, all the members of which are vowed not to use wooden matches. He himself will use only wax matches because he objects to large quantities of trees being chopped down so that wooden matches can be made of them. "What is the use," he says, "of our protecting the forests from fire by the expenditure of great sums for fire guards and then deliberately burning up whole forests of trees every year in these wooden matches?" Almost every one sympathizes with this point of view, and it is possible that in time the anti-wooden match society will be quite large.

These are only a few of them. There is also the woman who is organizing a society for the extermination of cats in cities and the other woman who is at the head of a secret movement for the proper regulation and control of street car conductors.